

ISLAM

Material gain is not enough

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

When a person works, makes money, builds a house, makes an effort to improve his standard of living, he appears to be engaged in efforts towards some worthy end. But a life of this nature cannot be called a purposeful life, for these activities do not demonstrate man's unique status. It might seem as if they are the result of deliberation, but if one looks at the matter in depth, one will see that in actual fact the motive force behind these actions is the same urge that motivates an animal in various ways, in its concern for its own survival. It is the pressure of one's needs, and the wish to fulfil the demands of one's self that underlie such a life. These are the considerations which, in fact, guide a person in his search for his livelihood.

When a human being grows up, he realizes that there are certain material necessities without which he cannot live. He requires food, clothes, a place to live; he requires a reliable source of income to sustain him throughout his life. He is forced by these considerations to obtain these things. Then he sees that those who have an abundance of these material things enjoy respect and apparently possess every form of happiness and luxury in this world. Thus he is driven on to do more than just seek a livelihood; he desires to earn to a degree greatly in excess of his actual requirements.

For this reason these activities cannot be considered as being directed towards the purpose which sets a human being apart from the animal and lends him a higher distinction. To determine the purpose of life is, in short, the effort to make life meaningful. It must surely, therefore, be one which is in accordance with a human being's unique status; it must be one which leads him on the path to success and progress in terms of his true nature.

www.cpsglobal.org